

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently amended) A network-based, computer-implemented method of fulfilling ~~multi-modal freight shipment involving at least two transportation modes between a first location and a second location, the method comprising:~~
~~receiving a derivative purchase request for capacity between said first location and said second location, said derivative purchase request having contract requirements that specify at least a shipment volume and a performance time;~~
~~ascertaining from a database of available derivative contracts a plurality of potentially suitable derivative contracts that satisfy said contract requirements; and~~
~~selecting a subset of said plurality of potentially suitable derivative contracts to satisfy said derivative purchase request, said subset including at least a first derivative contract for a first transportation mode of said at least two transportation modes and a second derivative contract for a second transportation mode of said at least two transportation modes, said first transportation mode being different from said second transportation mode.~~

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of derivative contracts represent all derivative contracts in said database that satisfy said contract requirements.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said subset is selected using a fair and neutral trading rule.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
~~receiving data pertaining to capacity releases from shippers, each of said capacity releases specifying a shipment volume and an origination point and a destination point, each of said capacity releases further specifying performance details including one of a departure time, a time en-route, and an arrival time;~~

bundling selected ones of said capacity releases into said available derivative contracts, wherein at least one of said available derivative contracts comprises a plurality of said capacity releases.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein said bundling includes grouping capacity releases that involve geographically proximal origination and destination points.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein said bundling further includes grouping capacity releases that fall within a predefined time window.

7. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein said bundling includes grouping capacity releases that fall within a predefined time window.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 4 further comprising:

providing an adjustment market facility for allowing a purchaser of said capacity between said first location and said second location pursuant to said subset of said plurality of potentially suitable derivative contracts to trade a specific component of said subset of said plurality of potentially suitable derivative contracts with other participants of the freight industry.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving shipment forecasts pertaining to potential future shipments and self-assessed qualitative ratings associated with said shipment forecasts;

aggregating said shipment forecasts and qualitative ratings into aggregated shipment forecasts and aggregated qualitative ratings; and

furnishing said aggregated shipment forecasts and said aggregated qualitative ratings to a trader to enable said trader to evaluate a volume of derivative contracts to be purchased, said trader representing one of a market maker, a forwarder, and a carrier.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein a self-assessed qualitative rating of said self-assessed qualitative ratings involves a shipper's self-assessment of at least four of a set of criteria

that includes demand, manufacturing readiness, manufacturing location, capacity, product, lane, and lane stability.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein a self-assessed qualitative rating of said self-assessed qualitative ratings involves a shipper's self-assessment of a set of criteria that includes demand, manufacturing readiness, manufacturing location, capacity, product, lane, and lane stability.

12. (Original) The method of claim 9 further comprising:

computing quantitative ratings pertaining to said shipment forecasts, said quantitative ratings being based at least on historical data pertaining to past shipment forecasts and past actual shipment volume;

aggregating said quantitative ratings into aggregated quantitative ratings; and
furnishing said aggregated quantitative ratings to said trader.

13. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said first transportation mode represents one of an air transportation mode, a sea transportation mode, a rail transportation mode, and a truck transportation mode, said second transportation mode represent a different one of said air transportation mode, said sea transportation mode, said rail transportation mode, and said truck transportation mode.

14. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising providing a derivative contract trading facility to enable market makers to electronically trade said first derivative contract and said second derivative contract prior to expiration.

15. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising providing data pertaining to said first derivative contract and said second derivative contract to an electronic booking system ~~upon based on~~ performance time of said first derivative contract to book capacity for shipment using said first transportation mode and said second transportation mode respectively.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising

Amendment A submitted in response to
Office Action mailed 01/04/2008
U.S. Pat App. No. 10/810,060
June 4, 2008
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computing freight indices based on historical shipment volume between said first location and said second location; and

furnishing said aggregated shipment forecasts and said aggregated qualitative ratings to a trader, said trader representing one of a market maker, a forwarder, and a carrier.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said derivative purchase request represents futures purchase request.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said derivative purchase request represents option purchase request.